

The Lost Art of Friendship:


Why Everyone Including Teens Feel Alone In this Connected World

Where is love?

Does it fall from skies above?
Is it underneath the willow tree
That I've been dreaming of?
Where is she
Who I close my eyes to see?
Will I ever know the sweet hello
That's meant for only me?

[Oliver \(Film Adaption of Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens\)](#)

Charles Dickens one of if not the greatest fiction writer in history published Oliver Twist as a three-volume book in 1838. Being primarily a non-fiction reader in my adolescent years Oliver Twist failed to capture my interest until I watched the film adaptation. It was the music which stirred my suppressed emotions with the song "Where is Love?"

Embarrassingly True 

I am giving you the reader insider information at this point. For weeks I went around singing the song "Where is Love" (in private of course). This was my secret. Shared with no one. Something was happening to me. I didn't understand what or why.

I only knew these feelings were a far cry from my first-time watching Star Trek, when after viewing several episodes I made the decision be like Spock, a science officer, devoid of emotion, able to blunt the emotional turbulence of life with logic.

True!

The first officer Spock part of my personality rose up in conflict with my inner Oliver "the love man" Twist judging the sappiness of my emotionalism over "Where is love?" to be an inefficient use of time and mental energy.

Spock and Oliver would be at war for some years, but there was no getting around the resonance of "Where is Love?" Being about 12 to 13 years old at the time, it would take another

12 to 13 years to understand I was in the midst of an adolescent awakening, the discovery that emotion was not the enemy, it didn't always have to be painful, in fact it could open the door to amazing relationships.

These amazing relationships as it turned out were friendships, with God (James 2), my wife (Ephesians 5), my kids (Psalm 127), as well as an assortment of incredible people who along with God and my family have satisfied my yearning to be known, understood, and unconditionally accepted despite my significant inadequacies and spiritual unworthiness. **CONSCIENCE**

My family and friends have all proven to be more loving than me as they have helped me on my journey of life by listening, sharing, understanding, forgiving, laughing, inspiring and providing me with a circle of influences that have changed me for the better. **FRIENDSHIP**

While my dysfunctions in the area of love and relationship can be paralyzing I am growing (albeit slowly) in my confidence to think about, talk about, and pursue the deeper discovery of love despite my insecurities.

Insecurity → obstacle to have

Rejection → Shame → Humility Necessary → Find love

Perhaps you can relate to my struggle? I stumbled out into the world uneducated, ignorant, insecure, and misguided, yet somehow, through the humbling process of healing the

God of this life provides, I was able to discover the meaning of the words sung by Samm Henshaw

when he asks "How Does It Feel To Be Loved?"

It goes timelines, swipe right, deep like five times
Don't know what it sounds like but someone
Told me it's a little Marvin with some candlelight
A little ocean on the weekend with a can of sprite
I mean a loving wife (oooh) OOh, love is such a mystery
I'm so perplexed by all the things my eyes have let me see
People think that love is things like physicality when in reality
It's meant to hold you down like
Gravity (How does it feel to be loved?)
How does it feel to be loved
That's what they say
Oh my, must be insane

Enemies of love [1) Pride 2) Selfishness]

We all want to know how it feels to be loved. I believe it feels like friendship, but my fear is we as a country and culture, be we secular or religious have lost the art, the considerable understanding and skill necessary to make real friends.

I believe this 'lostness' is responsible for much of the societal anger and polarization, the hate produced by the unhappiness of loneliness. Stats Bear This Out — B.I.G.

Looking back with the perspective of experience it is clear that as an adolescent a movie and song stirred up my emotions, making me aware of my emotional life, forcing me to feel my loneliness, helping me see and sense the answer was not avoidance but the pursuit of love.

Oliver Twist awakened my emotional awareness leading me on a journey to understand my emotional life, but without an emotional education it was more difficult and painful than it needed to be. I write to help others avoid the pain and for those who have experienced the pain to [discover how to let go] of yesterday, then work today with a vision for a better tomorrow.

Friendship Requires an Emotional Education

Yet what is distinctive is just how selective we are about the topics we deem it possible to educate ourselves in. Our energies are overwhelmingly directed toward material, scientific, and technical subjects and away from psychological and emotional ones.

[The School of Life: An Emotional Education](#)

Visit a high school and you will find students in English, Algebra, and History classes. They are involved in chess and technology clubs, play football and basketball, and seek every opportunity to pad their resume of accomplishments to smooth their path into the best university possible.

Anxiety

Emotions
Relationships

Much anxiety surrounds the question of how good the next generation will be at math; very little around their abilities at marriage or kindness. We devote inordinate hours to learning about tectonic plates and cloud formations, and relatively few fathoming shame and rage.



Obsessive

[The School of Life: An Emotional Education](#)

the why behind our strongest emotions

Students leave high school ready for many aspects of life, but rare is the graduate

prepared to navigate their emotional life. This is because in a world where we are required to

take tests to get a driver's license, style someone's hair, graduate from high school or college, become a lawyer, or any number of other functional aspects of life, we provide little to no

Behavioral?

education for those getting married, preparing to have and raise kids, or any of the other relational aspects of life, those areas which provide the greatest tension, stress, and grief when done ineffectively.

- Regret
- Disappointment
- Tragedy

We are all in desperate need of an emotional education, the very thing capable of helping us nurture and strengthen the relational aspects of life, and let's face it, more often than not it

under taught, under emphasized

isn't our failure to understand the philosophy of Nietzsche or Einsteinian principles of physics which sink our lives. What sinks us most often is our failure to navigate relationships, the

emotional aspects of life, and yet we continue to neglect and diminish the need for an emotional education.

Loneliness, Substance Abuse, Crime = cost of ignoring emotional education

unteachable
unlearnable

The assumption is that emotional insight might be either unnecessary or in essence unteachable, lying beyond reason or method, an unreproducible phenomenon best abandoned to individual instinct and intuition. We are left to find our own path around our unfeasibly complicated minds—a move as striking (and as wise) as suggesting that each generation should rediscover the laws of physics by themselves.

[The School of Life: An Emotional Education](#)

Alain de Botton introduces the concept of "An Emotional Education" in "The School of Life," and in so doing takes aim at our education system.

"The contemporary education system proceeds under two assumptions about how we learn. First, it believes that **how** we are taught matters far less than **what** we are taught. What educates students is—it's believed—the soundness of certain arguments, not especially the manner of their delivery. Teaching should not rely on gloss and charm. It is not, and should never be, a branch of the entertainment industry.

[The School of Life: An Emotional Education](#)

Inherent in his analysis is the observation that our current education system possesses the weakness of focusing on the [extrinsic (the what)] rather than [the intrinsic (the how)]. This approach is not limited to academics, we do the same in companies, places of worship, and on athletic fields of play (there are many outstanding exceptions, but they tend to be exceptions not the norm).

Extrinsic motivation focuses on "the what," our outward behavior. The aim of those who influence us in this way is to bring us into compliance with a system of thought and behavior, to get us to conform to the structure or curriculum.

Inside
Out

Intrinsic motivation focuses on "the how." The aim of those who influence us in this way is to teach us from the inside out, believing when the inside is convinced, truly educated, then the capacity to understand increases, empowering us to [not merely learn] the curriculum, but to understand its value, its meaning, its purpose, and how it fits into life.

Mr. De Botton nor I think everything we learn will be easy or enjoyable, but he says what I believe which is [the extrinsic or "human hard drive" approach to education] has significant limits and will leave anyone taught in this way with significant emotional deficits.

...the education system assumes that once we understand something, it will stick in our minds for as long as we need it to. These minds are envisaged as a little like computer hard drives: Unless violently knocked, they will hold on to data for the long term. This is why we might imagine that education could stop at the age of twenty-two, once the important things have been imbibed.

[The School of Life: An Emotional Education](#)

Emotionally Stunted

Alain de Botton makes a compelling case for an emotional education, what I describe as intrinsic teaching, that which is [necessary for life beyond twenty-two.] After we learn the [essential functional subjects] of life from high school and college, those which [qualify us to work] and earn, too many of us are left with little awareness or understanding of how to process the "major truths about our deeper selves."

[wow]

But an emotional education may require us to adopt two different starting points. For a start, how we are taught may matter inordinately, because we have ingrained tendencies to shut our ears to all the major truths about our deeper selves. Our settled impulse is to blame anyone who lays our blind spots and insufficiencies bare, unless our defenses have first been adroitly and seductively appeased. In the face of critically important insights, we get distracted, proud, or fidgety. We may prefer to do almost anything other than take in information that could save us.

Avoidance

[The School of Life: An Emotional Education](#)

My experience, observation, and research teach me we are at an emotional crossroads in America and the world, because while we are educated enough to create wonders like Artificial Intelligence, those same educations provide us with few solutions to the problems tearing our countries and cultures apart.

Relational & Emotional Problems

We are brilliant enough to automate the inanimate but not to understand the animate. We are coming apart at the seams because of our emotional inability to manage the complexity of human not robot life. Our struggle is with people, understanding and respecting our differences, learning to connect and work with each other without hating or destroying each other.

Good with Machines

Not so good with People

As a result, we are becoming more and more effective at creating the capacity for digital connection but are growing less and less effective at emotional connection, which has brought

us to a difficult and dangerous place where we have lost our understanding of and capacity for human relationship.

We seem to have forgotten or perhaps never learned the importance of an emotional education, the capacity to make friends, leaving us lonelier than we have ever been.

A lost Art ☹️

How we lose the Art of Friendship?

Turkey Creek Jack Johnson:

Why do you do it?

Doc Holliday:

Wyatt Earp is my friend.

Turkey Creek Jack Johnson:

Friend? Hell, I got lots of friends.

Doc Holliday:

I don't.

Tombstone

One of the best ways to receive an emotional education is through friendship. For this to occur these friendships must be built from the inside out, [intrinsically not extrinsically].

When we live extrinsically everyone, and no one is a friend. We have no meaningful definition of, expectation for, or discriminating criteria to help us distinguish between friend and acquaintance. Mere outward behavior, being in physical or digital proximity is all that seems necessary for many to consider someone a friend.

core confusion

The art of building friendships is lost precisely because we choose to build superficial rather than deep relationships. Deep relationships are built intrinsically, from the inside out. We

① develop a meaningful definition for, expectation of, and discriminating criteria which allows us to ^{distinguish} differentiate between an acquaintance and a friend. While we enjoy our acquaintances and treat them with kindness, we understand the difference between these and those we call friends is only the latter eliminate loneliness from our lives. ⑤ = Deep Relationship

Loneliness comes when we are surrounded by acquaintances yet still feel alone. Better to have one real friend than 10 acquaintances.

The truth of this principle and distinction is brought to life with emotional resonance in the classic 1993 western Tombstone. Doc Holliday played by Val Kilmer in what should have been an Oscar nominated performance joins Wyatt Earp, Turkey Creek Jack Johnson, and a couple of others to track down the outlaw "Cowboys."

Holliday is sick with tuberculosis but refuses to leave. Turkey Jack Johnson tells Holliday he should be home in bed then asks, "Why do you do it?"

Doc Holliday's response is profound as he says, "Wyatt Earp is my friend." Turkey Creek Jack Johnson responds with incredulity saying, "Friend? Hell, I got lots of friends," to which Holliday responds, "I don't." ← Boom!

"The Lost Art of Friendship" occurs imperceptibly, with the busyness of life acting like a fog obscuring our vision just enough to erase the yellow double lines on the road of life, those lines which distinguish between friend and acquaintance. Before we realize we have become "Turkey Creek Jack Johnson," calling everyone friend because we have diminished our belief in, expectation for, and commitment to the unique and powerful experience of being friends.

A Quick Sidebar About Men and Loneliness

I'd like to tell you about a guy I know a friend of mine. His name is Brian Piccolo. And he has the heart of a giant, and that rare form of courage that allows him to kid himself and his opponent, cancer. He has a mental attitude that makes me proud to have a friend who spells out the word 'courage,' 24 hours a day, every day of his life. Now you honor me by giving me this award. But I say to you here now Brian Piccolo is the man who deserves the George S. Halas award. It is mine tonight... and Brian Piccolo's tomorrow. I love Brian Piccolo. And I'd like all of you to love him too. And so tonight, when you hit your knees, please ask God to love him.

→ Rethinking Definition of Friend

[Gale Sayers \[accepting the George S Halas award\]](#)

Tombstone is not the only movie to say a word about friendship and specifically friendships among men. There is an older, and more emotionally vulnerable movie which addressed the possibilities for friendships among men, the classic 1970s made for TV film [Brian's Song](#).

Real friendship tends to be difficult for men and boys. We are taught early on that our [emotions can lead us into the "dark arts of human vulnerability,"] something best avoided, but if we must [mess with this type of dark magic] then we are led to believe our only hope for success is under the tutelage of a girlfriend or wife (something I agree with and applaud because they can help us understand vulnerability is not a dark art, just as Harry learned from Hermione, Professor McGonagall, and Ginny Weasley).

One way or another men and boys, as well as those who care about us, must understand without help we are likely to be among the most isolated and lonely.

With this in mind, there is an exceptional and extreme truth worth noting, lonely men are most likely to be the perpetrators of violence in the form of mass shootings ([What do most of America's shootings have in common?, Why many mass shooters are 'loners'](#)).

Obviously, the majority of men and boys will not become mass shooters, but the underlying frustration, anger, and discouragement experienced by lonely, isolated, and emotionally repressed men can unleash many other unhealthy behaviors, most of which can be thwarted with healthy friendships.

The Uncomfortable Truth about Male Loneliness is an honest depiction of the messiness involved with building healthy male friendships, identifying emotional emptiness, embracing vulnerability, and letting these experiences serve as our emotional education.

While the path the writer takes may be different than ours, his effort to wrestle with male loneliness is illuminating. Particularly important is the need for us to understand the ability to have vulnerable conversations, make meaningful connections, and sustain emotional engagement.

This type of emotional education is an elusive process for most men. More often than not we find ourselves swept up into the epidemic of loneliness consuming the world.

Many like myself have responded to loneliness by replacing the desire for intimacy with the pursuit of ambition. Unless someone teaches us, we will mistake group activity, team achievement, and the comradeships of competition for relationship and friendship. We will be lonely.

“The Lost Art of Friendship” is my attempt to discuss this awkward and undiscussable subject, not only for men but for everyone, to provide solutions, and inspire all of us to help each other overcome the loneliness which so pervades our country, culture, and personal lives. A loneliness not only men, but women and children find difficult to identify or admit, and that we must become more aware so we become motivated to change.

The Loneliness Epidemic

Something I have learned about my life and the lives of the hundreds I have spoken to about their [emotional and spiritual lives] is that loneliness is experienced more often than admitted.

Sometimes we are unaware of our loneliness, filling the empty space created by our emotional and spiritual isolation with noise and activity, so we can avoid exploring the foreboding emptiness of our aloneness

The problem of loneliness cannot be avoided. It requires our attention because it has become dangerous, so much so that in 2018 Britain appointed a Minister of Loneliness ([UK Appoints a Minister of Loneliness](#)) with Japan following their lead in February of 2021.

Japan has experienced a 750-person increase in the number of people who have committed suicide totaling 20,919, and these are lonely deaths that “involve people dying inside their homes and remaining undiscovered for long periods of times ([Japanese Minister Appoints ‘minister of loneliness’ to Cabinet](#)).

Lest we think this is a problem from which the United States has escaped we need only read the “[The Lonely Century](#)” by Noreena Hertz who writes, “In the United States almost one in five people do not have a single friend at work,” a fact that predates the coronavirus and gives us another perspective on why so many may prefer to work from home. ?

Atlantic magazine tackled this question of loneliness in an article by Stephen Marche entitled, “[Is Facebook Making Us Lonely](#),” where he revealed the fact that, “According to a major

study by a leading scholar of the subject, roughly 20 percent of Americans—about 60 million people—are unhappy with their lives because of loneliness.”

Mr. Marche writes compellingly of how our social interactions leave much to be desired as “We meet fewer people. We gather less. And when we gather, our bonds are less meaningful and less easy,” and all of this was before the Coronavirus.

What shocked me most was his contention that “We have outsourced the work of everyday caring.”

In the face of this social disintegration, we have essentially hired an army of replacement confidants, an entire class of professional carers. As Ronald Dworkin pointed out in a 2010 paper for the Hoover Institution, in the late '40s, the United States was home to 2,500 clinical psychologists, 30,000 social workers, and fewer than 500 marriage and family therapists. As of 2010, the country had 77,000 clinical psychologists, 192,000 clinical social workers, 400,000 nonclinical social workers, 50,000 marriage and family therapists, 105,000 mental-health counselors, 220,000 substance-abuse counselors, 17,000 nurse psychotherapists, and 30,000 life coaches. The majority of patients in therapy do not warrant a psychiatric diagnosis. This raft of psychic servants is helping us through what used to be called regular problems. We have outsourced the work of everyday caring.

[Is Facebook Making Us Lonely](#)

TRUE ****

We need mental health care workers now more than ever, but their therapeutic skills cannot eliminate loneliness when we have no friends, and the lack of friends is not only a problem when it comes to our emotional health but our physical health as well.

We need professional careers more and more, because the threat of societal breakdown, once principally a matter of nostalgic lament, has morphed into an issue of public health. Being lonely is extremely bad for your health. If you're lonely, you're more likely to be put in a geriatric home at an earlier age than a similar person who isn't lonely. You're less likely to exercise. You're more likely to be obese. You're less likely to survive a serious operation and more likely to have hormonal imbalances. You are at greater risk of inflammation. Your memory may be worse. You are more likely to be depressed, to sleep badly, and to suffer dementia and general cognitive decline.

[Is Facebook Making Us Lonely](#)

We need friends for our mental, emotional, spiritual and physical health. My belief is our loneliness exists because we no longer understand what it means to be friends, nor do we know how to make, sustain, and grow our friendships.



A Few Thoughts About Teens

Teenagers are experiencing a punishing loneliness during this pandemic. This experience is chronicled by Ellen McCarthy in [“The loneliness of an interrupted adolescence.”](#)

The pandemic has punished people of all ages, overwhelming parents, isolating grandparents, shortchanging kids. But the emotional fallout for teenagers has been uniquely brutal. At just the age when they are biologically predisposed to seek independence from their families, teens have been trapped at home. Friends — who take on paramount importance during adolescence — are largely out of reach, accessible mostly by social media, which brings its own mix of satisfying and toxic elements.

What teens are experiencing is worth examining for readers of all ages. According to Ken Duckworth of the National Alliance of Mental Health, “one in five Americans suffered from some sort of mental illness before the pandemic, and that number is now two in five ([Pandemic Pushes Mental Health to the Breaking Point](#)),” which means the teen experience is reflective of an emotional distress we are all experiencing.

[A June survey](#) by the Centers for Disease Control found that a staggering 26 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds reported having serious suicidal thoughts in the past 30 days, compared with 16 percent of 25- to 44-year-olds and less than 4 percent of people ages 45 and older. And [mental health visits to emergency rooms by 12- to 17-year-olds](#) increased 31 percent in 2020 compared with the previous year.

[The loneliness of an interrupted adolescence by Ellen McCarthy](#)

The emotional health of teens is an indicator of societal problem as [the Kaiser Family Foundation reports](#) “During the pandemic, about 4 in 10 adults in the U.S. have reported

symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder, a share that has been largely consistent, up from 1 in 10 adults who reported these symptoms from January to June 2019.”

In addition to anxiety and depressive disorder 36% report difficulty sleeping with 32% having difficulty eating 32%. Twelve percent report an increase in alcohol consumption or substance abuse with 12% reporting a worsening of chronic conditions.

We may not all be therapists but any of us can become a friend, and right now there is an urgent need for friendship.

The type of friendship capable of reducing the loneliness and emotional distress of life described by the following answers to 7 questions based on reflections from the William Deresiewicz essay “The Death of Friendship.” *Tremendous Essay*

1) What is the difference between Friendship and Distraction?

Having been relegated to our screens, are our friendships now anything more than a form of distraction?

[The Death of Friendship, William Deresiewicz](#)

Each one of us will have a variety of relationships. Whether these people are parents and siblings, girlfriends or boyfriends, co-workers or classmates, acquaintances or neighbors, the question is will any of them become friends?

A common mistake is to identify relationships as friendships, when the only purpose it serves is to distract us from the uncomfortable, difficult, or painful.

When we use relationships for distraction, they are not friendships. Friendships are different. We rely on them to help us through the uncomfortable, difficult, and painful.

The questions and answers which follow are designed to help each of us seek out and build friendships, the type of relationships with an uncommon depth, devotion, and connection.

Podcast Not A Fit Here

Great Scripture

The man of too many friends [chosen indiscriminately] will be broken in pieces and come to ruin, But there is a [true, loving] friend who [is reliable and] sticks closer than a brother.
Proverbs 18:24 (AMP)

2) Have we forgotten what it means to be friends?

In retrospect, it seems inevitable that once we decided to become friends with everyone, we would forget how to be friends with anyone. We may pride ourselves today on our aptitude for friendship - friends, after all, are the only people we have left - but it's not clear that we still even know what it means.

[The Death of Friendship, William Deresiewicz](#)

We cannot be friends with everyone otherwise friendship has no meaning. This does not mean we walk around telling people they are not our friends, but that we develop our own understanding of and definition for friendship, then devote ourselves to building the uncommon depth and connection characteristic of these unique relationships.

Building these types of friendships will require three things, 1) a sizeable investment of time, 2) a willingness to take the initiative, and 3) commitment to deep conversation.

3) Do we accept as truth that friendship is rare?

The idea of friendship in ancient times could not have been more different. Achilles and Patroclus, David and Jonathan, Virgil's Nisus and Euryalus: Far from being ordinary and universal, friendship, for the ancients, was rare, precious, and hard-won.

[The Death of Friendship, William Deresiewicz](#)

In our desire to be kind, inclusive, and caring we can diminish the quality of our friendships as we resist the truth that friendship is rare, precious, and hard won.

British Anthropologist and Evolutionary Psychologist Robin Dunbar writes in "[How Many Friends Does One Person Need?](#)" that we can all "distinguish friends from acquaintances by how we feel about them," with friends being "those we want to spend time with, whereas acquaintances are those whose company is more of a momentary convenience."

At the same time Dunbar says, "we make even finer judgements than this in real life," because when we "look at the pattern of relationships within the group of 150 that constitutes our social world, a number of circles of intimacy can be detected. The innermost group consists of about three to five people." 3-5 Magic Number

Dunbar Says Maximum Relationships WE can sustain #150

According to Dunbar this group of three to five constitutes "the small nucleus of really good friends to whom you go in times of trouble – for advice, comfort, or perhaps even the loan of money or help."

While Dunbar says there are additional groups of ten and thirty which are close, it is this three to five who form the circle of intimacy Deresiewicz describes as those rare, precious, and hard won friendships we each need.

4) What are the qualities of character necessary to build friendships?

Friendship was a high calling, demanding extraordinary qualities of character - rooted in virtue, for Aristotle and Cicero, and dedicated to the pursuit of goodness and truth.

[The Death of Friendship, William Deresiewicz](#)

There are three qualities of character necessary to form that circle of intimacy described by Robin Dunbar as Deresiewicz rare, precious, and hard won friendships.

The first quality is loyalty, those people with whom we share a willingness to stick through both the good and hard times. The second quality is empathy, those unselfish enough to spend time thinking about us not only themselves. The third and final quality of character is forgiveness, yes, forgiveness is a choice, a choice to love unconditionally, and it is the characteristic which binds all the other qualities together.

5) What does a real friendship look and feel like?

As for the moral content of classical friendship, its commitment to virtue and mutual improvement, that, too, has been lost. We have ceased to believe that a friend's highest purpose is to summon us to the good by offering moral advice and correction. We practice, instead, the nonjudgmental friendship of unconditional acceptance and support – “therapeutic” friendship, in Robert N. Bellah's scornful term.

[The Death of Friendship, William Deresiewicz](#)

The highest form of friendship helps us from the inside out. These friends are loyal, empathetic, and forgiving, which helps us feel safe enough to seek and welcome their advice and correction.

Friends like this usually set an example for us in three areas. First and foremost, they are curious about us, wanting to know our hopes, dreams, and plans. Second, they are

transparent about their lives, sharing the good, bad, and ugly sides. Finally, they are vulnerable about the emotions connected to their transparent sharing of their good, bad, and ugly, such that we know they have our best interests in mind because they have hidden nothing from us.

Curious + transparent + vulnerable = authentic

6) How do we increase the depth of our friendships?

We seem to be terribly fragile now. A friend fulfills her duty, we suppose, by taking our side - validating our feelings, supporting our decisions, helping us to feel good about ourselves. We tell white lies, make excuses when a friend does something wrong, do what we can to keep the boat steady. We're busy people; we want our friendships fun and friction-free.

[The Death of Friendship, William Deresiewicz](#)

superficial

Friendships should make us better. This requires depth. Friendships capable of increasing their depth share three qualities.

First, these relationships are purposeful, they understand to help each other, are committed to helping each other, seek to bring the best out in each other. Second, these relationships share an uncommon trust which allows them to speak any necessary truth in love. Third, friends like these practice emotional and spiritual endurance which allows them to push through the obstacles to ever deepening friendship.

7) Are you willing to invest in building quality friendships?

The fact of the matter is that one cannot have a profound connection with more than a few people. Time prohibits it. Deep friendship requires cultivation over the years—evenings before the fire, long walks together, and lots of time for talk. It requires keeping the television off so that the two of you can log in with each other. If your social calendar is too full to provide for such intimate bonding, it should be pared. “True happiness,” said Ben Jonson, “consists not in the multitude of friends, but in the worth and choice.”

[The Friendship Factor, Alan Loy McGinnis](#)

“[The Friendship Factor](#)” was the first book to make me think about the importance of friendship, and that how I had been building them was more careless than careful. Over the years I have come to understand the truth of the statement that, “deep friendship requires cultivation,” and in so doing discovered three final qualities in which we must invest if we want to build friendships as exceptional as they should be.

Admiration is an underestimated yet essential quality for building friendships, because it is admiration that prevents the destructiveness of envy and jealousy, two things responsible for unraveling countless relationships.

When we have a genuine admiration for our friends it leads to a second quality in which we should invest, which is to develop a vision for our friend, an exceptional belief in their possibilities.

Finally, we have practiced the approximately 15 ways to reclaim “The Lost Art of Friendship” in the answers to these 7 questions we will receive the blessing of all these investments, which is uncommon joy of true friendship.